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ABSTRACT

The program consisted of a series of talks by invited speakers, informal meetings and addresses by fellows, meetings with U. S. Office of Education personnel, and a trip to Washington to meet with two members of the House Education Committee. Short evaluations written by each participant indicate that most of the fellows thought that the isolated location was ideal for the conference because it emphasized interaction with colleagues, and that the meetings with Office of Education personnel and congressmen were very enlightening. However, most of the participants suggested shortening the sessions by one or two days, and providing more time for the fellows to meet with the invited speakers. (RT)

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ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR 1969-1970

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS IN EDUCATION

The Smithsonian Institution
Orientation Program for 1969-1970
Postdoctoral Fellows in Education
Belmont Conference Center
Elkridge, Maryland
September 14-20, 1969

Between September 14th and 20th, 1969, at the Belmont Conference Center, near Elkridge, Maryland, the Smithsonian Institution held an Orientation Program for the 1969-1970 Postdoctoral Fellows in Education of the U.S. Office of Education. The principal objective of the program was to give a greater understanding of the context within which research in education is carried out and the broad objectives toward which research in education should be directed.

The program was planned as a series of informal meetings of eighteen participants and invited speakers to focus their attention on the various matters affecting research in education. The meetings were organized to afford the greatest opportunity for analysis and discussion of opinions expressed by the individual participants and speakers on the subject matter. Each participant was given an opportunity to bring to bear his own experience and individual research interest on the subject under discussion. In addition to the scheduled meetings, opportunities were provided for casual discussion among the participants.

The participants arrived at the Belmont Conference Center on the afternoon of Sunday, September 14th. Prior to the beginning of the planned program, the participants had an opportunity to meet informally. In the evening the opening session was held in the Conference Room. The Director of the Program, David B. Chase, welcomed the participants and introduced the Coordinator-Moderator for the Program, Dr. Virgil E. Christensen, who reviewed the schedule for the week-long program. Dr. Lee G. Burchinal, Director, Division on Information Technology and Dissemination, U.S. Office of Education, then addressed the participants, discussing some of the background and objectives of the Fellowship Program. Following Dr. Burchinal's talk there was general discussion and the remainder of the session was devoted to planning the informal presentations which the fellows would make concerning their recent research, research in progress, and plans for the Fellowship Year.

The morning session of Monday, September 15th was devoted to presentations by two speakers: Dr. Julian C. Stanley, Professor of Education and Professor of Psychology, Johns

Hopkins University, and Dr. Gene V. Glass, Co-director, Laboratory of Educational Research, University of Colorado. Dr. Stanley spoke on "Postdoctoral Research," and the title of Dr. Glass' talk was "Future Perspectives in Research." The remainder of the day, including the evening session, was devoted to presentations by participants covering their recent research, research in progress, and plans for the Fellowship Year.

On Tuesday, September 16th, the morning session was again devoted to presentations by two speakers. Dr. John Hayman, Executive Director of Research and Evaluation, School District of Philadelphia, discussed "Research Administration." The second speaker was Dr. Francis A. J. Ianni, Director, Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute, Teachers College, Columbia University, who spoke on "Research in Anthropology as It Applies to Education." During the afternoon and evening sessions the participants held informal discussions and continued their presentations covering their recent research, research in progress, and plans for the Fellowship Year.

The morning session on Wednesday, September 17th, was held at the U. S. Office of Education where the participants were addressed by Dr. David S. Pollen, Deputy Associate Commissioner, Dr. Glen C. Borrigter, Director of Elementary and Secondary Education Research, Dr. Hendricks Gideonse, Program Planning and Evaluation Officer, and other officials of the Bureau of Research.

In the afternoon, the participants met with The Honorable John Brademas, M. C. and The Honorable Albert H. Quie, M. C. in the Rayburn House Office Building. Following this meeting the participants returned to Belmont for dinner and the evening session which was devoted to further presentations by participants covering their recent research, research in progress, and plans for the Fellowship Year.

The morning session on Thursday, September 18th included presentations by two speakers: Dr. James S. Coleman, Profes-

sor of Social Relations, The Johns Hopkins University, and Dr. John M. Mays, Office of Science and Technology, Executive Office of the President. Dr. Coleman spoke on "Sociological Influences on Educational Research," and the title of Dr. Mays' talk was "National Research Needs."

The afternoon session was devoted to a presentation by Dr. David R. Krathwohl, Dean, School of Education, Syracuse University. Dr. Krathwohl discussed "Needed Changes and New Approaches in Research." In the evening the participants held informal discussion.

At the morning session on Friday, September 19th, the participants heard presentations by two speakers: Dr. Samuel Rosenfeld, Director of Applied Research, Auerbach Corporation, and Dr. Charles C. Hauch, Chief, Comparative Education, Institute of International Studies, U. S. Office of Education. Dr. Rosenfeld spoke on "General Strategy of Users and Uses of Information," and Dr. Hauch discussed "International Education." The afternoon was devoted to group discussions, and in the evening the participants were addressed by Dr. Richard M. Harbeck, Chief, Research Training Branch, U. S. Office of Education. Dr. Harbeck's talk on the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program concluded the program.

On Saturday, September 20th, the participants departed from the Belmont Conference Center.

Each of the participants and the Coordinator-Moderator were asked to write a brief evaluation of the program, including suggestions as to how the program might be improved. The replies are as follows:

Harvey B. Black:

The program overall was well balanced, thought provoking and conducive to fruitful interactions between the participants. The participation of Dr. Christensen as monitor was helpful in giving a sense of continuity to the ongoing fellowship program and provide a very smooth administration.

Of particular value was the highly competent but unobtrusive way the staff of Belmont conducted their affairs. I would suggest that it would have been most helpful for me to have had at least one day probably at the end of the conference which could have been free to conduct professional business in the Washington area. I believe that scheduling would have made this possible. This seems consistant with the fact that our session is perhaps one of the longest held at Belmont. Participants such as myself who are located a great distance from Washington would find it very convenient to visit various agencies and other organizations involved in their activities. Another strategy which evolved spontaneously in our group was to allow participants to make modifications and or plans for the schedule of events during an early session in order to give further expression to further characterize the group.

Lamore J. Carter:

The program was excellently conceived and carried out. The very feature that one or two fellows criticized at one point was, in my opinion, a major strenght of the six day session. I speak of the lack of a definite, hard, unalterable structure of activities.

I can not think of a way that I might suggest to improve the program. The choice of speakers was superb; the daily activity format was well liked, the special feature (trip to

Washington) achieved more than it was planned for, I think.

Perhaps for the 1970-71 fellows, because of having already used so many of the most reputable men in education as our speakers, you may wish to poll postdoctoral fellows for one or two suggested speakers.

Could it be that our group was quite unique beyond the exclusive of having won the fellowship awards? I was very much impressed with the uncommonly deep feeling of camaraderie which seemed to have developed among the group. This, I feel, added uncalculable dimensions to the profits derived by all of us. It suggests to me that our group will keep in contact and that the contract will result in more research activity than would otherwise occur.

The Orientation Program at the Belmont Conference Center was a definite success.

James J. A. Cavanaugh:

Since returning to Boston I have begun my year of study at Harvard and am now deeply entrenched in classes, seminars and writing. Alfred Jones and I are sharing a statistics course as a result of the week at Belmont. Both of us became more aware of our appalling ignorance and the apparent necesity for grasping some of this topic. I doubt if either of us become statisticians, however we should have some speaking knowledge of the subject when and if our group reconvenes.

I hope plans are made for a brief meeting of the group to discuss some of the activities in which we have been involved over this year so that perhaps fruitful research can grow out of the year and associations.

Peter Dunn-Rankin:

The enforced isolation was effective. The resulting interaction broadened my perspective and made me aware of the many kinds of people that are interested in educational

research as well as piquing my interest in areas of only casual aquaintance.

The speakers were generally interesting. A basic plan for their talks could consist of 15 or 20 minutes in which the speaker states those things that they think might be of interest and importance to us and then let that be followed by questions. Often the early questions we asked obliterated any points that they might have wanted to make because time ran out.

The meeting at the U. S. Office of Education could have been made more effective by having an informal coffee hour with the speakers and thus getting to meet each one personally.

The trip to the House Office Building was very worthwhile and every effort should be make to have the group meet with Representatives and Senators who are concerned with education.

Specific recommendations whose rationalization is not delineated and therefore more or less intuitive are: (1) Have the conference run one day less. (2) Have a more informal beginning with short introductions by each participant, then later on their talks can be about their research interests. In addition have Dr. Harbeck give his talk at the beginning of the conference so that some of the reasons for being there are given focus.

The value of the conference to me was primarily one of ego building. I think that this is something that can not be taken lightly. The fellows move to a new location and are meeting with people that are minimally interested in them or their efforts and it is extremely heartening to know that the people in the training branch of the U. S. Office of Education are interested in them and what their efforts hold for the future of education. The informal meeting with peers allowed a tremendous amount of enriched contact with others that will

be important for the rest of one's professional life. Such verbal interaction was fruitful because we were forced to get to know each other.

Secondly, the conference gave a person the chance to reflect on the coming year without plunging headlong into it. That is, it gave me a chance to revaluate my expectations and activities in light of what I had heard others were doing.

Robert H. Ennis:

On the whole I thought that the conference was successful: It brought me in contact with a number of people doing important work of which I was unaware, opening my eyes to a number of possibilities; it enabled me to think about the direction of my year of study in the context of contemporary education, especially as seen in Washington; and it showed me much more clearly the problems faced by our friends and allies in Washington who had previously seemed so distant and occasionally unresponsive.

I recommend that, if funds are available, a similar conference be held next year--with somewhat less of an externally-dictated organization but with a statement at the outset of the purposes of the conference. Specifically, fewer scheduled speakers would have enabled us to do more justice to each and to learn more from one another. Perhaps one speaker per day would have been enough.

William L. Goodwin:

Overall, my impression of the Orientation Program was favorable. Somewhat over half of the speakers were stimulating and the fellow-to-fellow interaction was interesting. Retrospectively, it is possible to suggest some changes that might have produced better outcomes in certain instances: these suggestions are reflected in the recommendations below:

1. More information should be sent to, and requested from, the fellows before the Orientation, possibly giving them a better set to get the most from the conference.

2. Schedule in the talks by the participants before the conference begins. This tells them how long a talk to prepare and when it should be ready. A logical order can be guestimated before the participants arrive, reducing much lost time in discussions over who's next. Also, all participants should speak in the first couple of days.

3. Brief the speakers coming in on the nature of the postdoctoral fellowship program and the general characteristics of the fellows. This should help the speakers to focus their comments.

4. Schedule additional "forays" into Washington for those desiring them, by scheduling an open evening or two and providing a rental car.

5. Retain the visit with the Congressmen. Expand if possible.

I guess my recommendations boil down to this: instead of a steady schedule of moderate structure, work for a schedule that interlaces periods of high structure with periods of moderate structure and with periods of no structure. sessions with speakers might be highly structured, for example, while sessions using participant-speakers might be conducted with much less rigidity on time and give and take. Periods of no structure would be free time, in effect. By spelling out things in advance, persons hopefully would be prepared to receive maximal program benefits.

Alfred H. Jones:

I feel a debt of appreciation for the splendid arrangements for a stimulating, constructive conference.

The compatability of the conferees, of course, contributed greatly to the success of the meetings; but the environment in which we gathered added to the overall effect.

In accordance with my sense of satisfaction over the week spent at Belmont, then, I have no new suggestions for

program modification. As was pointed out at the time, the group might have profitted from more time spent with fewer outside resource persons, but that involves scheduling vagaries over which no one has much control. The visit to Capitol Hill should by all means be retained as perhaps the most illuminating experience of the week. In the days before Wednesday, I frequently heard many of the old cliches about the "politicians" in Congress. After meeting with two ranking members of the Education Committee, the conferees whistled a somewhat different tune.

Merton S. Krause:

Being an outsider to the educational research establishment, I found the Orientation Program quite informative. Being a rather assertive and talkative sort, I found the interchange of ideas during the seminar sessions stimulating. Being somewhat sentimental, I found the setting and provisions most pleasurable. And being more or less suited to them, I found the company affable and interesting.

William P. Morgan:

The recent Orientation Program which was held at Belmont was quite valuable for me personally. Most of the speakers were excellent, but it was unfortunate that so few of them were able to remain after their talk for continued discussion. The length of the conference was rather long, but I'm not sure that it should be shortened. I might suggest that each participant in the future be provided with a vita for all postdoctoral fellows in attendance.

Robert W. Schmeding:

Probably the conference was a bit longer than needed. I would suggest a three, or at most a four-day conference in the future.

An alternative format might be considered. Instead of having a great number and variety of speakers, pare the number to three or four, let them each stay one whole day, and perhaps

present two or three programs.

Austin D. Swanson:

My reaction to the Orientation Program is generally favorable. Belmont provides the perfect setting for such a meeting.

The program itself was of high quality, but I have the feeling that the exposure was too broad and not of enough depth. I would have preferred one major presenter each day who would have remained with us all day. In the same vein, you might consider having a senior researcher in residence with the Fellows for the entire program.

I also feel that the program lasted one day too long. In part this may come from the fact that the presenters of Friday morning were not as relevant as those of the preceding sessions but also I think it stems from the fact that we were just "conferenced-out" by that time.

Personally, the conference served to orient and acclimate me to my postdoctoral year. It gave me a better notion as to the dimensions of the educational research which is under way and the areas for needed research. In this regard, the sessions conducted by the Fellows themselves were of great value. I hope that it will be possible near the end of our year to come together again for two or three days to share with each other our work during the course of the year.

William Wiersma:

I enjoyed the conference very much. The interaction with the other participants was very valuable. Although all our fellowship programs differ, the knowledge of what other people are doing helps us define our own expectations. I enjoyed most of the speakers and I feel that the speakers as a group made a noteworthy contribution. The discussions of the U.S. Office of Education personnel were also beneficial, mainly from an information standpoint.

Dr. Christensen did an excellent job as Coordinator-Moderator. He paid constant attention to the operation of the program and no matter was too trivial for his consideration. I feel that the amount of structure provided was necessary. The entire conference seemed somewhat long, although I would be at a loss for suggestions of what to delete. In retrospect it is easy to suggest leaving out the least effective speakers, but when planning the program, this is not apparent. I would suggest that the program conclude on Friday so that participants can return to their homes Friday evening.

All-in-all I feel it was a very well conducted and worthwhile conference.

Joanna P. Williams:

Overall, the program was excellent. It really did provide needed orientation for the year, for one thing by giving us the opportunity to meet the other Fellows. I now have a focus on the Postdoctoral Fellows Program as a program that I did not have before. And Dr. Harbeck's comments and those of Dr. Burchinal helped put the fellowship program in perspective in terms of the whole of Research Training.

The speakers were very good. Dr. Stanley's presentation was outstanding. His remarks and counsel on being a postdoctoral fellow were cogent, relevant, and very wise. I especially enjoyed Dr. Glass, Dr. Ianni, and Dr. Krathwohl as well. I suppose many of the Fellows have mentioned that there was not enough time with a speaker -- they rushed in and out. I feel the same way. We realized that the scheduling was partially a function of the speakers' preferences, but it would be better if you could arrange with a few of the speakers to stay around a bit longer.

Some of the Fellows felt that the program was too structured. I did not, although I was a little dismayed to read in the outline that all our evenings were scheduled as well as all day, every day. The problem for me, however,

was mostly a matter of presentation, in terms of the program outline. It looked as if the program schedule was fixed and firm, and it was inevitable that a group like ours would take exception. In retrospect, I think that if a couple of hours on Monday morning had been devoted exclusively to discussions of planning, with the "democratic process" stressed (with some givens, of course, like when outside speakers would be coming), everyone would have been happy to go along with the program, more or less, as it actually was set up. I do not, however, feel that any sort of group dynamics or sensitivity training or whatever should be attempted, as a couple of people suggested -- that would turn more people off, I think.

Dr. Christensen did a good job of organizing all of us -- no easy task!

The only part that dragged on too long for me were the individual presentations by the Fellows. No structure or limits had been set (or agreed upon by all of us) beforehand, and, as always, a few were rather long.

The trip to the U.S. Office of Education and to Congress was very informative, and provided good stimulation for discussions on Thursday. In summary, everything was very well planned. I think the program might well be cut by one day -- departure after lunch on Friday, perhaps -- but not more than that.

Robert H. Woody:

I believe that the objectives of the Fellowships were vague enough to provoke feelings of ambiguity. However, by the end of our seminar at Belmont, I felt a resolution to these uncertainties; in other words, I believe that the seminar accomplished a much needed goal: provision of identity. I left the seminar with a very positive feeling about the group of Fellows, the value of the Fellowship, and, I must admit, an increased interest in educational research per se.

In terms of improving it, I believe that the seminar

should definitely be scheduled earlier, before the Fellows actually start the activities in the institution where they will spend the year. The seminar should probably be scheduled in late August. I also believe that it should be clearly stated as to whether the seminar is mandatory or voluntary; as it was, participation was nebulously defined, and I suspect that there was some unfortunate misunderstandings on the parts of several persons. I would endorse having the leadership be changed each year, presumably a Fellow from the previous year.

Virgil E. Christensen:

Belmont is an excellent place for this program. The isolation is an important asset. Without the isolation the Fellows would not become as close and the mutual sharing of research ideas would be greatly reduced.

The basic idea of bringing the Fellows together for purposes of getting them acquainted and for sharing research ideas is still a very good one. While there was some question as to the objectives of the conference expressed at the beginning, these doubts disappeared as the week progressed.

Every speaker made a worthy contribution. Some were appreciated more than others, but not a single one failed in his assignment. I could not name a single one that should not be asked back another year. The sessions with Congressmen Brademas and Quie were much appreciated and very worth while. The visits with Congressmen should be included in future programs if at all possible.

The idea of bringing in a Fellow from a previous year to serve as Coordinator-Moderator is good. The assignment is not an easy one, but it should remain a part of future programs.

In making plans for the future, I would not recommend changing the program a great deal. There might be one or two fewer speakers and the program should end on Friday noon. Friday afternoon and evening were most productive this year but the week-long session is really one day too long.

David B. Chase
Program Director